9:Megas I, B-5,4 (no date) 1951 EH1 Greece
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clearly show its origin from the Italian Renaissance» (1) (see fig. 42, Plate XIII 8). B 342 [351]

In this category of houses of the plains can also be included the troglodyte house, which is seen even to-day in some villages of Nothern Bulgaria. But it forms a separate sort of building as to disposition, construction and arrangement, and it will be mentioned separately at the end of the present survey.

a. The Bulgarian House of the Mountains.

The houses of the mountainous areas of Bulgaria show a much greater variety of shapes: they are two-storied and, from an architectural point of view, more advanced, than the houses of the plains. The explanation, however, given by Zlatev, that this fact is due to the higher income of the population who live in mountainous areas and become rich through cattle-breeding, can only be accepted if we consider the fact that in the plains of Bulgaria, as well as in those of Greece, there have been big farms belonging to Turks during their occupation, and the farmers were living there as serfs.

The older of the still existing houses of the mountainous areas of Bulgaria are from the middle or the beginning of last century. If we exclude the houses of the Rodope and the Orvelo areas, that present some peculiarities, the characteristic mark of the highland Bulgarian house is the open portico, which covers all the length of one of the sides of the upper floor, usually the side overlooking the yard. The building has normally no windows opening to the street. This portico also includes the staircase leading from the ground floor to the upper floor. Thus the staircase is almost external, but under the roof of the house (Plates XIV and XV).

The upper storey usually projects over the external wall of the ground floor, along the whole or part of the frontage of the house. This is achieved by the very wide use of timber, both in construction and decoration. The kind of timber used is oak, in the forest districts of Haimos (Balkan) and Sredna Gora, and pine-trees as well as other conifers in the districts of Rodope and Orvelo (Pirin). It would appear that for the abundance of timber, the whole of the highland house was originally made out of wood (1). B [313]

1) According to **Niederle**, op. cit. p. 119, «the wood construction is the original form of house building for the Slavs, both in their villages and their SL 342

[Text continues on p. 69] 67 333

[The Bulgarian House of the Mountains]

In these two-storey houses as well, we distinguish in the upper-floor the two basic spaces just as in the Bulgarian house of the plains, namely the kăsta and the oda or soba with the so-called tsardak (or islak or soundourma) that is the open portico, in front of them. The lower storey is used, just as in the Greek houses, for the stabling of cattle and the storing of fruits, but very often it also includes a room with a hearth for the residence of the family during the winter. This is also called «kăsta» i.e. house, or even better, «lower house» and «small house» in contrast to the «upper», or «big house» that is the main room of the upper floor, where the family lives in the summer months.

The second room, called soba, is also used as sleeping quarter for the family, and more seldom for the storing of food and other articles. For this last purpose, another additional space is also used and is called «killer»; the upper floor is thus divided into three spaces (Plate XV).

This distribution is shown by the house of Sredna Gora (Messon Oros) which is very important as it exercised an influence upon the houses of Balkan, according to Zlatev (1). (See Fig. 43, 44 and Plate XV 1-2).

The portico in the upper floor is used, just as in the Greek houses, for the drying of fruit and as a living room of the family during the summer months. Parts of it are usually divided by light wooden or brick partitions, forming spaces called «ambar» (stores) for cereals, or even small rooms called «odaja» and «soba».

Finally, in some more composite forms of houses there is a space between the two main rooms, used as an anti-room, having the floor higher by 0.15-0.20 m. and called prust (Greek «μπρούστι»); and also some other smaller spaces, divided off and used as hiding-places or cellars. In the more developed forms, such as in the houses of the village

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towns, even in their palaces. Slavs never used stone construction until the 10th cent., except for their Southern tribes who, having arrived in the Balkan peninsula and the Italian boundaries on the 6th cent., could see for themselves the models of Byzantine and Roman architecture». Stone construction was first used in the building of churches and of palaces by experts specially invited from abroad. Cf. J. Cvijic', op. cit. pp. 228, 230, 241, G. Megas, Θρακ. Οἰκήσεις, p. 48.

1) According to Cvijic, op. cit. p. 250, «the house of Srednja Gora is the one that corresponds better to the desires of all Bulgarian farmers, because it has spread all over the country after the Turkish occupation».